

may belong to the same species was tacitly admitted by Fernald (1938) when he says that "very evident transitions occur." Twenty years earlier, Farwell⁴ described as *Juncoides pilosum* var. *michiganense* plants with the dark castaneous perianth that is supposed to be a diagnostic character of *L. carolinae*.

In the event that *Luzula saltuensis* and *L. carolinae* are eventually proved to be the same species, the latter binomial will have to prevail, but in any case the name *L. acuminata* Raf. should be rejected as a *nomen dubium*.—GEORGE NEVILLE JONES, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

THE IDENTITY OF VINBER AND VINLAND.—Some ethnobotanical aspects are involved in the identity of Vinland the Good. According to old Scandinavian sagas, Norsemen under the leadership of Leif Ericson and Thorfinn Karlsefni, were supposed to have come there between the years 1000 and 1006. The plants mentioned are a tree (*mösurr*), a wheat (*hveiti*) and the *vinber*, generally interpreted as the vineplant. According to Fridtjof Nansen, the quotation of wheat and vine is only a reminiscence of medieval legends. To the majority, they refer to specific plants. Old opinion holds that *vinber* could only be a vine (*Vitis*). More recently, Fernald after giving some consideration to the fact that it might have been some red currant, assumed that the *vinber* would more probably be the mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium Vitis-Idaea*). The latter is one of the most popular berries in Scandinavia. It is actually known under the name of *lingon* in Sweden, *tytebaer* in Norway and *raufberjalyng* in Iceland. Fernald's opinion has not been generally accepted. Leroy Andrews, Steensby and Brunn have revived the old opinion which believes it to be a vine. Both interpretations are more or less in accord with the different attempts to localize The Hop, the Norse settlement in Vinland. Vine (*Vitis*) is found on parts of the Maine coast, as well as in the St. Lawrence estuary (Steensby places The Hop at Montmagny, on the south shore, 35 miles below Quebec). If, on the contrary, *vinber* were *Vaccinium Vitis-Idaea*, this interpretation would agree with the various hypotheses of localization because the plant is found in

⁴Rep. Mich. Acad. Sci. 20: 170 (1918).

Montmagny, along the coast of the baie des Chaleurs (where Bovey incidentally situates The Hop), on the southeastern coast of Nova Scotia and in different sections of the Maine coast.

The Fernald hypothesis apparently has no linguistic basis. Furthermore, according to Dr. Rolf Nordhagen (oral communication) director of the Oslo botanical garden and a brilliant ethnobotanist, as well as a taxonomist and phytogeographer, vinber is in present-day Norway, the name given to the red currant (*Ribes vulgare* or *Ribes rubrum*). There is no evidence whatsoever that the name was ever attributed to *Vaccinium Vitis-Idaea*. *Ribes vulgare* is a European species now grown in America where it frequently escapes culture. As this species cannot be implied in the Norsemen's journey, the allusion may be to some other native American species which has red berries (mainly *Ribes triste*). It could be mistaken for the European red current by the majority of travelers. Such red currants grow in all stations involved in the tentative localization of Vinland the Good. Until further study, the identification of the vinber in the Vinland saga as a red current appears to be the most reliable hypothesis.—JACQUES ROUSSEAU, MONTREAL BOTANICAL GARDEN.

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